

# Urban Holding

**What is urban holding?** Urban holding is a zoning tool used to make sure that an area will have adequate urban services and facilities, including schools, fire and police protection, water, sewer, roads, and drainage, to support development at urban levels.

**What is the difference between urban holding and urban reserve?**

Urban holding is a zoning tool applied to properties within the 20-year planning boundary, known as the urban growth boundary.

Urban reserve is an area of land located outside of the urban growth boundary. Properties in the urban reserve areas are likely to be included in future expansions of the urban growth boundary.

**Why was urban holding established in Clark County?** Urban holding was established as a part of Clark County's comprehensive plan to manage growth over the next 20 years. While growth is anticipated in areas where services are not immediately available, it is projected to occur in phases, over time. Urban holding ensures this phasing by allowing urban development to occur only when urban services can be provided with the new development.

It is also important to note that to proceed with urban development and comply with the Washington State Growth Management Act, you must be able to provide an area with full urban services.

**Who established urban holding in Clark County and where does it apply?**

The Board of Clark County Commissioners first applied urban holding in 1994. It was applied on a limited basis in specific areas where a single and specific urban service did not exist.

In 2004, the Board of Commissioners expanded the urban growth areas and the list of facilities and services under the definition of full urban services. Urban holding was applied to all expansion areas to allow urban development to be phased in, through annexation to cities other than Vancouver. The board is considering approaches for lifting urban holding in the Vancouver Urban Growth Area.

**How can urban holding be lifted from a property?**

Other than through annexation, urban holding can only be lifted by the Board of Clark County Commissioners. In order to do so, the Board of Commissioners must approve documentation that demonstrates the ability to provide urban services to the area using existing providers or through private investment in infrastructure and services. This process is more complex in the Vancouver Urban Growth Area than in the urban growth area surrounding Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, and Yacolt.

**When will measures be available to individual property owners or groups of property owners?**

Currently, Clark County Public Works and several developers are conducting a transportation impact study to identify needed improvements in urban holding areas. Based on the transportation study findings, a model development agreement will be established that could be used to lift urban holding on a parcel-by-parcel basis.